

# Sx<sup>w</sup>uytn-Kaniksu Connections 'Trail' Project

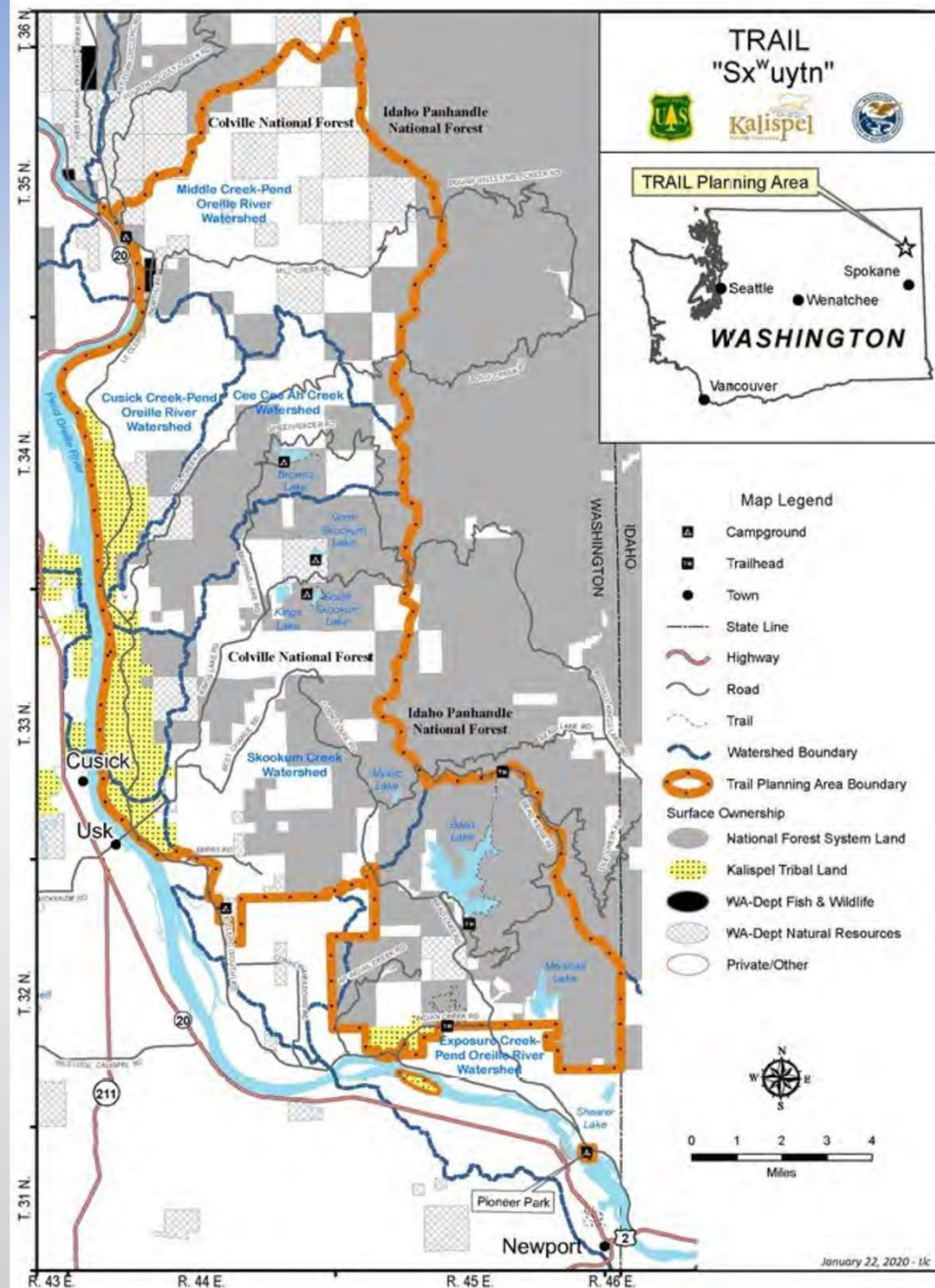
## Draft Environmental Assessment Proposed Actions

Public Meetings:

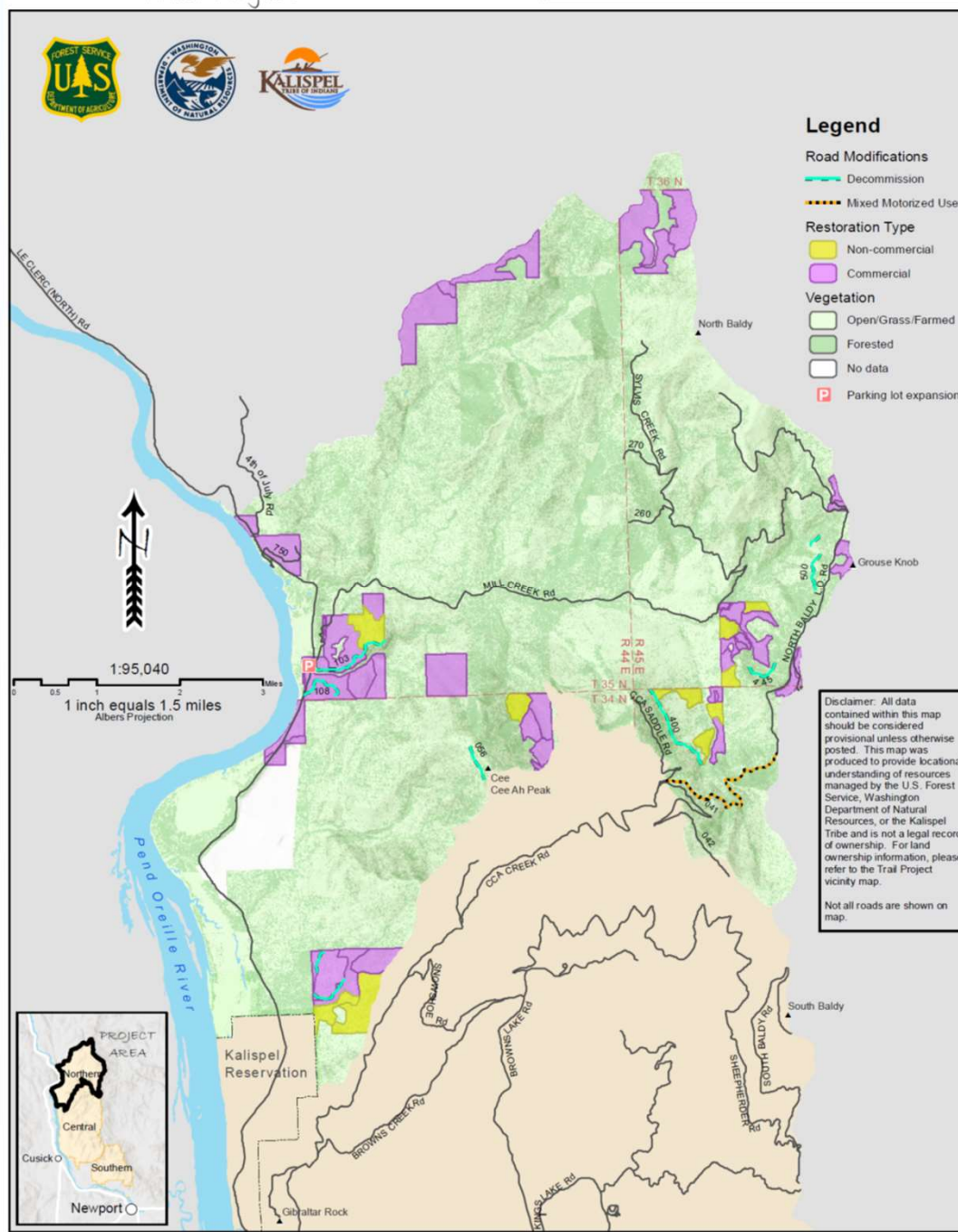
Oct 20, 2020 6:30-8:00PM

Oct 22, 2020 2:30-4:00PM

# PROJECT LOCATION



## Proposed Action Alternative



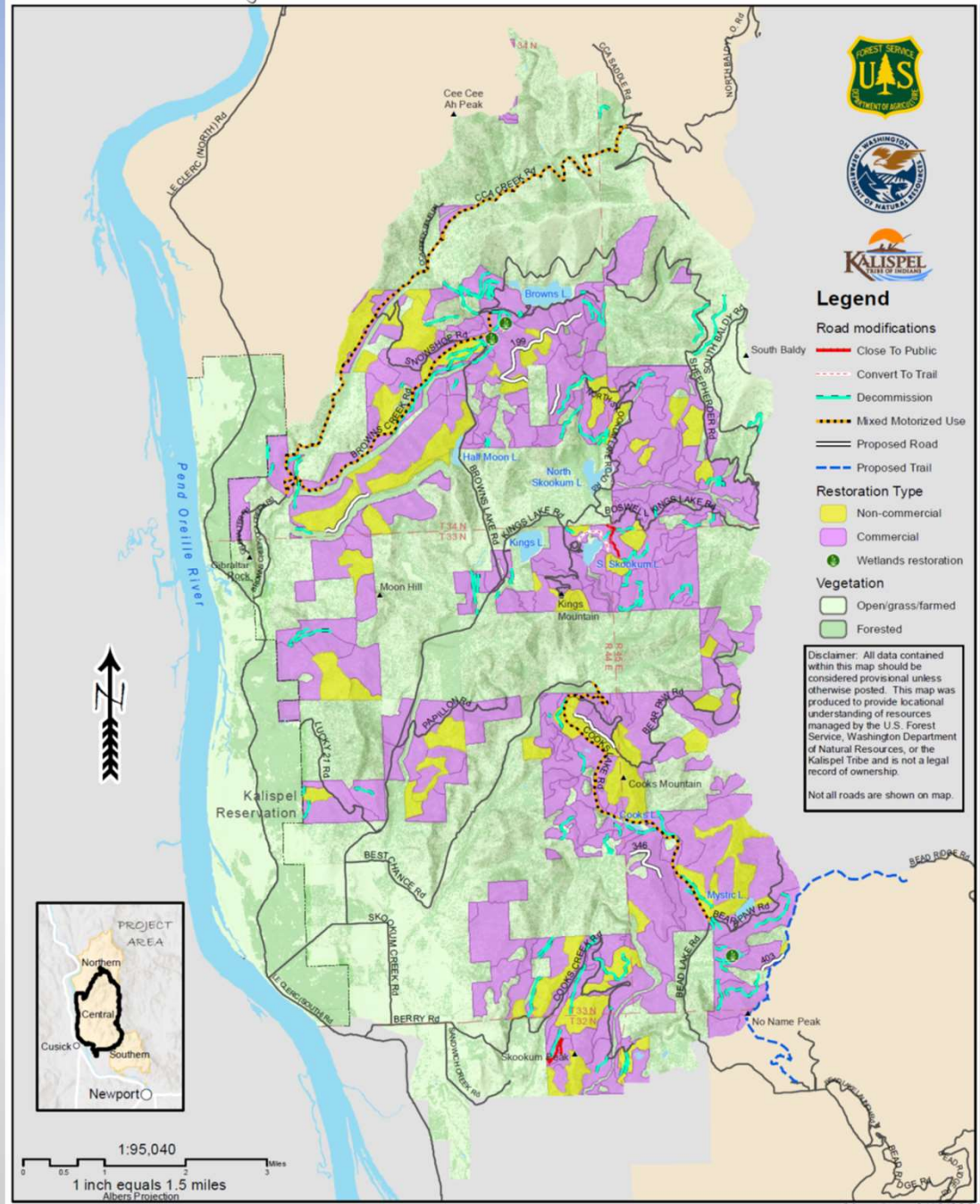


# Proposed Action: Central

## Sxʷuytn Kaniksu Connections Trail Project

Map 2 of 3 (Central)

Proposed Action Alternative





# ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

# Alternatives Proposed

## Recommendations

- Road Management Proposals
  1. Keep all roads
  2. Reduce roads, no new
  3. Keep ½ area roadless
- Create a Restoration Forest Reserve
  - North & east of Bead Lake
  - Remove all roads, reintroduce fire

## Not fully analyzed because...

- Proposals do not substantively address Purpose and Need
- Proposals do not meet Forest Plan direction
- Proposal does not meet Forest Plan Direction
- Does not meet PO County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

# PROPOSED ACTIONS



# Vegetation Treatments

*Commercial:  
24,400 acres*

- Commercial Thinning:  
8,800a (36%)
- Shelterwood with Reserves:  
6,800a (28%)
- Group Selection:  
8,800a (36%)

*Non-Commercial:  
45,400 acres*

- Precommercial thinning: 8,100a
- Rx fire (natural fuels): 4,500a
- Rx fire (treated units): 6,500a
- Whip felling: 15,000a
- Piling/burning: 8,400a
- Mastication: 800a
- Riparian area thinning: 2,000a

# Resource Restoration Actions

## *Hydrologic System Restoration*

- Large woody debris placement: 730a
- Culverts: 40 culverts
- Stream crossing restoration: 50a
- Hydrologic stabilization of roads: 60 miles
- Wetlands restoration: 26a

## *Wildlife Habitat Structure Improvements*

- Den sites (lynx+): 10 structures
- Turtle/amphibian habitat: 5 structures
- Bear protection: 5 cans
- Loon nests: 2 platforms
- Information board: replace existing

# Recreation Improvements

- New Non-motorized trail (*Bead Lake Loop – 7 miles*)
- New Trailhead (*Bead Lake Loop near No Name CG*)
- Convert roads to 'Open to All Vehicles'\* (*19 miles*)
- New OHV trail (*move OHV's off section of Bead Lake road*)
- Open campground to OHV's (*Cooks Lake*)
- Add boat launch dock (*Bead Lake*)
- Parking expansions (*Bead Lake & at mouth of Mill Creek Rd.*)

\*Details for road management modifications are in Draft EA Appendix D.

# Transportation System Improvements

- New System Roads – 6 miles (*inc. 2 mi. on existing roadbed*)
- Road Decommissioning\* – 51 miles (*~16% of roads in project area, inc. 46 mi. currently closed*)
- Roads converted to non-motorized trail\* – 3 miles
- Close road to non-administrative use\* – 2 miles
- New temporary roads – 51 mi. (*half on existing roadbeds*)
- Rock pits – up to 18 acres (*2 per north, central and south zones @ 3 acres or less each*)

\*Details for road management modifications are in Draft EA Appendix D.

# Standard Practices and Design Elements



# Standard Practices

Standard Practices direct how actions will be performed and incorporate current best management practices.

69 Standard Practices relevant to this project cover:

- Aquatics
- Fuels
- Invasive species
- Minerals
- Project Timing (holidays)
- Recreation and trails
- Road management
- Road construction, closures, and bridges
- Sensitive Plants
- Silviculture
- Special Uses
- Soils
- Wildlife

*See Draft EA, Appendix B*

# Design Elements

Special location and/or habitat-specific considerations germane to this project, in addition to Standard Practices.

*Included are:*

Recreation – identification and protection of key dispersed recreation sites

Scenic Integrity – protection of visual quality seen from travel routes, residential and popular use areas

Sensitive Plants – identification, avoidance and protection

Special Uses – access to & protection of permitted uses

Wildlife – reducing disturbance to habitat of raptors, lynx, ungulates, and bears including recreation trail locations

*See Draft EA Section 2.3*

# For More information:

## Colville National Forest Project Website

- *Draft EA, Appendices, Related Documents & Maps, Comment Portal*
- <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54315>

## Kalispel Tribe Department of Natural Resources Website

- *Background Information, Draft EA, Appendices*
- <https://knrd.org>

## Follow-up questions or comments:

- Email questions: District Environmental Coordinator Theresa Mathis  
[theresa.j.mathis@usda.gov](mailto:theresa.j.mathis@usda.gov)
- Call: (509)-447-7316 or fax (509) 447-7301
- Mail: 315 North Warren, Newport, WA 99156
- Email comments: [comments-pacificnorthwest-colville-newport@usda.gov](mailto:comments-pacificnorthwest-colville-newport@usda.gov)

Questions?

# Detailed Proposed Actions



# Commercial Vegetation Treatments

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
Commercial thinning	8,800 acres (36%)	An even-aged harvest method that removes suppressed, intermediate, and codominant trees. However, some dominants may be removed to meet stand density targets or create a desired species composition.
Shelterwood with Reserves	6,800 acres (28%)	A regeneration harvest method that removes trees except those needed for regeneration purposes. Prepares the seed bed and creates a new age class of trees. Reserve trees would be retained to create a two-aged or multi-aged stand of a desired species composition. Additional live trees would be retained for reasons other than regeneration, such as trees exhibiting signs of wildlife use or unique late structure. Areas would be evaluated to determine if natural regeneration would need to be supplemented with planting seedlings.
Group selection	8,800 acres (36%)	An uneven-aged regeneration method in which trees are cut in small groups where new age classes are established. These openings may contain clumps or individuals of desirable seed trees which make the contiguous group selection areas smaller than 3 acres, on average. Commercial thinning would occur between the group selection areas. Multiple entries would ultimately result in an uneven-aged stand of 3 or more age classes. Initial cutting would likely result in a two-aged stand structure. Areas would be evaluated to determine if natural regeneration would need to be supplemented with planting seedlings.
Total commercial treatment	24,400 acres	

# Non-Commercial Vegetation & Fuels Treatments

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
Precommercial thinning	8,100	The cutting of trees to reduce stocking density, change species composition, increase growth and improve forest health. Residual trees are typically western larch, white pine, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir, though other species may be left.
Prescribed burn, natural fuels units	4,500 <sup>7</sup>	Use prescribed fire to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires. The intent would be to reduce surface fuels, stand understories and fuel ladders; raise the live crowns of overstory trees; promote the growth of fire-adapted tree species; and rejuvenate grasses and desirable browse species for wildlife.
Prescribed burn, commercial restoration units	6,500	Use prescribed fire to reduce logging slash, remove undesirable regeneration, promote the growth of fire-adapted tree species, and rejuvenate grasses and desirable browse species for wildlife.
Whip felling	15,000	Removal of sapling and pole size trees damaged during commercial harvest or displaying insect or disease concerns.
Mechanical Piling & Pile Burn	8,400	Piling of harvest slash to reduce surface fuels or enhance regeneration. Piles are subsequently burned if they cannot be utilized for commercial or other purposes.
Mastication	800	Mechanical shredding of unwanted vegetation (shrubs, small trees) and scattering material along the forest floor.
Riparian management area <sup>8</sup> (RMA) thinning	2,100	Thinning of trees within the RMA to increase growth and canopy cover of residual trees over time and provide future coarse woody material to streams.
Total non-commercial vegetation treatments	45,400 acres	



# Hydrologic System Restoration

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
Large woody material placement	730 acres	Placement of large logs or root wads in stream systems to improve aquatic habitat.
Culvert replacement or removal	40 culverts	Culverts on NFS roads that do not currently meet the requirements for aquatic organism passage would be removed or replaced. Additional culverts may also be replaced if identified in the area.
Stream crossing restoration (non-system roads)	50 acres	Existing stream crossing structures on unauthorized roads in proposed treatment unit RMAs would be removed and the stream channel stabilized and recontoured to mimic the adjacent natural topography. Estimated at approximately 0.1 acre of restoration per crossing.
Hydro-stabilize system roads	60 miles	Road storage and stabilization treatments to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to water quality, aquatic habitat, and riparian resources. Hydrologically stabilized roads minimize road erosion and road hydrologic connectivity to the stream network.
Wetlands restoration	26 acres	Improve water quality and wetland habitat where past management altered the hydrology and lowered the water table. Actions may include conifer removal, soil decompaction, invasive species removal, and removal of old water diversions.

# Wildlife Habitat Improvements

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
Create den sites for lynx and other rare forest carnivores	10 structures	In multi-storied stands on the lynx range, provide micro-sites of concealing cover for rare forest carnivores. Create log piles consisting of at least 3-5 layers of larger (9-14 inch) logs crisscrossed or lain lengthwise in triangular groupings of 3 logs. Cover the top with a few layers (about 2-3 feet) of branches and other small material.
Herptile Structures	5 structures	Install down logs on the margins of ponds or wetlands, partially in open water. The intent would be to provide loafing sites for turtles and cover for amphibians.
Bear habitat improvement	10 cans	Replace existing, conventional garbage cans with animal-resistant cans at the WA DNR North Skookum Lake Campground.
Loon platform creation	2 structures	Install artificial floating nest platforms for loons on Bead and Marshall Lakes.
Information board	1 structure	Replace existing 1-panel information board with a 2-panel information board at Marshall Lake.

# Recreation Improvements

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
Non-motorized trail construction	7 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a new trail off the Bead Lake – Lodge Creek Trail (#127) around the northern and western ridge of the lake basin (~4.8 mi) &amp; add points for vistas</li> <li>• Connect the dead-end spur of the Bead Lake Trail to the new loop to provide an additional route (Bead to Ridge trail; ~1.8 mi)</li> <li>• Connect Geophysical to Indian Creek Community Forest (&lt;1 mi)</li> </ul>
Trailhead construction	1 trailhead	Construct a trailhead along the north side of Bead Lake Loop trail near No Name Lake Campground.
Convert existing road status to "Road Open to All Vehicles"	19 miles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Browns Lake Road (NFS 5030) from the junction of Browns Creeks Road (NFS 1921) to the junction of Sheepherder Road (NFS 5080) (~0.3 mile)</li> <li>• Open Browns Creek (NFS 1921) and CeeCeeAh (NFS 1920) roads to OHV use to provide connectivity to open IPNF routes (~14 miles)</li> <li>• Open Cooks Lake Road (NFS 5015) to connect Bead Lake (CR 3129) and Best Chance (CR 3407) roads (~5 miles)</li> </ul>
New motorized (OHV) trail construction	1	Construct trail along southwest side of Bead Lake (between trailheads) to move OHV use off County Road 30290 and to keep a loop route
Open campground to OHV use	1 campground	Open Cooks Lake campground to OHV use.
Bead Lake boat launch dock	1 dock	Add a small dock adjacent to the Bead Lake boat launch for safety and making boat launch easier.
Parking expansion	2 parking areas	Enlarge Bead Lake boat launch parking area to accommodate pickup trucks with attached trailer. Enlarge the entrance to Mill Creek Road (NFS 1200) to provide additional parking spaces for trucks with trailers.



# Transportation System Improvements

Treatment Activity	Estimated Quantity	Definition
New construction	6	<p>Road segments that are expected to be located on previously disturbed soils (there is an existing roadbed) ~2 miles</p> <p>Road segments that are expected to require creation of new roadbed ~4 miles</p>
Road decommissioning	51	<p>Removal of NFS roads through stabilization, recontouring, and revegetation activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently closed roads = ~46 miles (~16% of NFS roads in the project area)</li> <li>Currently open roads = ~5 miles (~2% of NFS roads in the project area)</li> </ul>
Road converted to trail	3	Convert from existing closed system road to non-motorized trail.
Close to non-administrative use	2	Close a road to public motorized access to protect wildlife habitat or update designation in Forest database for a road that is already undrivable.
<i>Temporary Roads</i> (miles; NFS lands)	51	<p>Road segments that are expected to be located on previously disturbed soils (there is an existing roadbed) ~25 miles</p> <p>Road segments that are expected to require creation of new roadbed ~26 miles</p>
Rock Pits	18	Up to two (2) sites may be located and utilized for each zone (northern, central, and southern parts of the project area), with a maximum size of three (3) acres per site, and if possible, an existing site would be used and expanded rather than create a new site.

# Road Management Details

**Table D- 1. Proposed Action – Road Management (summary)<sup>1</sup>**

Action	Approx. Miles	% of Road Mgmt. Proposal	% of NFS Roads in Project Area*
Mixed Motorized Use	19	30%	8%
Convert to Non-Motorized Trail	3	4%	1%
Close to non-administrative use	2	3%	<1%
Decommission			
Currently closed road	46	57%	16%
Currently open road	5	6%	2%
Totals	80	100%	27%

\* There are approx. 292 miles of National Forest System roads within the project area.